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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Cuba and the Treatment of the Press

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2. Cuba's treatment of foreign journalists is based largely on their usefulness to the regime. Those whom the regime may want to exclude, i.e. those known to be hostile or who have a reputation for independence, hard questions, and calling the shots as they see them, may simply never receive visas. Others who have visited Cuba and have subsequently written articles deemed unflattering by Havana are not permitted to return. Still others feel the full weight of the Cuban police state; French press photographer Pierre Gолendorf's experience in a Cuban prison, for example, led him to write the book SEVEN YEARS IN CUBA: THIRTY-EIGHT MONTHS IN CASTRO'S PRISONS. For those journalists who do get visas, access within Cuba is carefully controlled. Anyone poking around on his own for information on subjects that might put Cuba in a bad light--poverty, popular dissatisfaction, racial prejudice, corruption, police brutality, the black market, political prisoners, religious persecution, the quality of education, casualties in Angola, etc.--will quickly come to the attention of the authorities and the poking will be terminated. Foreign journalists know the "rules of the game" and usually take into account the fact that the government will judge them very critically on what they write or say and will expel them or prohibit them from returning if they don't toe the line.

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2 3. Castro, of course, has long used foreign journalists for his own ends gaining access to the foreign media that foreign politicians and government officials would never be able to gain in the Cuban media. Even when he gets major access, he is not always satisfied with the way he is treated. After the recent lengthy interview with Robert MacNeil on public broadcasting, for example, Castro's Radio Havana charged that "it is evident that Cuba's image and revolutionary process have been distorted and superficially portrayed by imperialism and its most noted agents." The full interview, with nothing cut, was then presented on Cuban television as well as both the domestic and international broadcasting services and was printed in full in the party daily, the most widely distributed newspaper in Cuba. One wonders when Mr. MacNeil will be permitted to return to Cuba.

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